

## Noted journalist Bill Wolcott passes

Western New York lost a well-respected and admired sports writer on Sept. 11, 2022. John William "Bill" Wolcott died peacefully at home surrounded by his loving family.

He was born in Buffalo to Robert and Sophia (Pat) Wolcott. He attended St. Monica's School until the family moved to West Seneca in 1951. He graduated from St. William's Grade School in 1955, Bishop Timon High School in 1959, and the University of Buffalo in 1967. While in the United States Air Force, he was stationed at McGuire Air Force Base from 1961 to 1965 and studied at Trenton State College. While in the Air Force, he flew space available to England and toured six countries, guided by the book "Europe on \$5 a Day." He once thumbed about 400 miles from New Jersey to West Seneca just to have a story to tell his future grandchildren. He was a member of the Winchester Volunteer Fire Co.

He began a 37-year career in sports reporting at the Niagara Falls Gazette in 1967. He became sports editor in 1973. Wolcott



worked as a reporter at the Lockport Union Sun & Journal in 2003 until his retirement in 2013.

At the Gazette, Wolcott covered hundreds of local games and reported on thousands more. A witness to the professional sports boom, Wolcott reported on the Buffalo Bills, Bisons, Sabres and Braves, as well as WABC bowling, PAL State Boxing Champion-

ships, arm wrestling, pocket pool, and bodybuilding. He watched the Niagara County Community College basketball team reach the national tournament in Kansas, and Niagara University go to the NIT finals at Madison Square Garden.

Wolcott covered the historic Summit Hockey Series between Canada and the USSR for the Gazette and Gannett News Service in 1972, and corresponded from Montreal, Toronto, Winnipeg, Vancouver and Moscow. A training camp photo he took in Toronto captured the first hard news of the eight-game series and appeared in several newspapers, including The New York Times. He covered the Buffalo Sabres in the Stanley Cup finals, the Buffalo Braves in the NBA playoffs, and the Buffalo Bills in four separate Super Bowls.

Wolcott won Best of Gannett and Best of Associated Press awards. His "Pigskin Prophets" poked fun at football prognostication, as he brought Gazette readers in touch with various celebrities such as the last man on the

moon (Gene Cernan); the treasurer of the United States; and Morganna, the Kissing Bandit. He was inducted into the Niagara Falls Sports Hall of Fame.

In Lockport, he wrote stories of war veterans, localized the Cuban Missile Crisis and humanized the closing of three Catholic churches. He sang "Heart of My Heart" while delivering flowers on Mother's Day.

Wolcott was an adjunct professor at Niagara University and Buffalo State College for two decades. He was also the moderator of the Index, the NU college newspaper.

A genealogy enthusiast, he traced his family roots to England in the 1500s. He was a son of the American Revolution, and his ancestor, Oliver Wolcott of Connecticut, signed the Declaration of Independence.

On Columbus Day 1976, Bill married Maria de Rosa at Prince of Peace Church in Niagara Falls. He forever called her "My Bride." In addition to his wife, Bill is survived by their three children: Sarah Elizabeth Nelson; Gregory D.

Wolcott, Ph.D.; and Heather Anne Hoffman. They have 10 grandchildren: Kirsten, Kaitlyn, Dominic, Nicholas and Luke Nelson; Robert, Vincent, Zachary, William and Isabelle Hoffman; and dozens of nieces and nephews. Bill is survived by his siblings: Mary, Monica, Robert, Marjory, Richard, Michael and Patrick, and their families.

A well-seasoned and prolific professional sports writer, Wolcott was a genuine and humble man with an understated sense of humor. His favorite Latin expression was "Semper ubi sub ubi." Everyone he met liked him and had great words to say about him. He loved God, his family, and his country.

Visitation will be held at Lane Funeral Home, Buffalo Avenue, Niagara Falls, on Thursday, Sept. 15, from 4 to 7 p.m.; and on Friday, Sept. 16, from 4 to 7 p.m. A prayer service will be held on Friday evening.

A Mass of Christian Burial will be celebrated on Saturday, Sept. 17, at 10 a.m. at St. Vincent de Paul Parish (Prince of Peace site).

## Project Hope paints its way to \$100,000 in donations

BY PATRICK J. BRADLEY

A local contractor's dedication to the community now has 100,000 reasons to celebrate its efforts to brighten the lives of others.

More than a dozen volunteers with Project Hope (Helping Others Paint Exteriors) spent last Saturday in Wheatfield giving

a Ward Road residence a fresh coat of paint to help a neighbor in need.

By the end of the day, the project's efforts had provided a combined \$100,000 of in-kind contributions to disabled war veterans, the elderly and people with cancer and other chronic illnesses.

"We've done this for 12 years

Project Hope image courtesy of Jesse Gooch

in a row," said Jesse Gooch, a Niagara County legislator and the owner of Painters Plus, a North Tonawanda company that provides specialty painting services to residential, industrial and business customers.

"We've been in business since 2001. I wanted to find a way to give back to the community and came up with Project HOPE," Gooch said.

Painters Plus office manager Anna Bettis said Project Hope received a dozen applications this year, most of them generated through its social media presence.

Selected as beneficiaries were Susan Faso and her husband, Carmen, who have autoimmune disease that prevents them from the upkeep of their home. Autoimmune diseases, which can be disabling, occur when a person's immune system mistakenly attacks healthy cells.

The day's Project HOPE participants included employees from Painters Plus and Two Guys Construction of Niagara, members of Sanborn-based Scouts BSA Troop 824 and North Tonawanda Mayor Austin Tylec. By the time they were finished, the entire two-story home sported a fresh coat of paint.



The application for the Fasos was submitted by Heidi Schuster, who lives next door.

"I'm so thankful for this," Schuster said. "They are great neighbors."

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## HART hosts its second 'Understanding Alzheimer's and Dementia' seminar

The Home Assistance Referral Team is hosting a seminar titled "Understanding Alzheimer's and Dementia." The free event is being offered to all caregivers enrolled in HART, and is also open to the public. It will be held from 6:30-8 p.m. Wednesday, Sept. 28, at the John Duke Center, 1201 Hyde Park Blvd., Niagara Falls. Light refreshments will be served.

The panel of speakers include Alicia L. Scott, DNP, NP-C, Ni-

agara Falls Memorial Medical Center; Andrea Koch, MA, director of education and training, Alzheimer's Association; and Abby Dearden, senior fitness specialist, and music and dance therapist.

HART Executive Director Christine S. O'Hara said, "The seminar will focus on basic information on the difference between Alzheimer's and dementia, stages, risk factors, and FDA-approved treatments. We hosted a seminar on Alzheimer's and dementia in

early summer in Lewiston, and the turnout was excellent. We hope to have another great turnout, as we host this second seminar in Niagara Falls."

Call the HART office at 716-754-8313 to reserve a spot, or for more information.

HART is a free referral service that connects seniors and others with qualified caregivers, allowing them to remain independent in their own homes.